

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Joseph A. Sawyer, Jr. (Reg. No. 30,801) on 8/8/08.

The application has been amended as follows:

after "method" (claim 1, line 1) insert -- **implemented in hardware** --;
replace ";" (claim 1, line 22) with -- . --;
replace "claim 5" (claim 12, line 1) with -- **claim 1** --;
after "medium" (claim 13, line 1) insert -- **implemented in hardware** --;
after "system" (claim 25, line 1) insert -- **implemented in hardware** --;
after "method" (claim 37, line 1) insert -- **implemented in hardware** --;
after "medium" (claim 40, line 1) insert -- **implemented in hardware** --.

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

1. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The prior art of record does not specifically disclose or remotely suggest

With regard to independent claims 1, 13, 25, 32, 37, and 40:

wherein the accessing means comprises means for utilizing the switch assignment table to evaluate a present load distribution across the plurality of switch modules, and means for assigning the server to the next switch module if the number of servers assigned to a current switch module is greater than the number of servers assigned to a next switch module.

In addition, Examiner points to the arguments of Applicant's representative (arguments on 6/26/08; pp. 14 – 17).

2. These limitations, in conjunction with the other limitations in the independent claims, are not specifically disclosed or remotely suggested in the prior art of record.

A review of claims 1, 4, 6, 8 – 13, 16, 18, and 20 – 42, in view of the Examiner's arguments above, indicates that claims 1, 4, 6, 8 – 13, 16, 18, and 20 – 42 are allowable over the prior art of record.

3. Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kenneth R. Coulter whose telephone number is 571 272-3879. The examiner can normally be reached on M - F, 7:30 am - 4 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Rupal Dharia can be reached on 571 272-3880. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Kenneth R Coulter/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2141

/KRC/